

# Democratic Leadership, Managerial Approaches And Employees' Job Contentment: A Survey Of Private Schools Of Peshawar City, Pakistan

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the administrative strategies employed by democratic leaders in private schools to enhance employee job satisfaction in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a descriptive Chi-Square design with Sample Random Sampling and Stratified Random Sampling, the research focused on 12 well-established private schools led by democratic leadership. Data was collected from approximately 200 teaching staff, with 180 participants included in the final analysis. A questionnaire for employees were used for data collection. Both qualitative <sup>1</sup>and quantitative analyses were performed using a descriptive Chi-Square approach. The findings revealed that effective managerial practices, such as task management skills, proper staff management, updating employees with current organizational needs, decision-making based on logical thinking, retaining authority with shared control, and delegating responsibilities while encouraging employee autonomy, contribute significantly to employee satisfaction with both their leaders and their jobs. The study identified a positive relationship between democratic leadership's managerial approaches and employee job satisfaction.*

**Key Words:** Job Contentment, Democratic Leadership, Managerial Approaches.

## INTRODUCTION

### Leader

The Webster's new international dictionary defined leader as, "one who leads others or a person having authority to precede and direct in some action, opinion and movement or one who is followed by others in conduct, opinion and understanding" (Webster, 1961). A leader is a person who has some distinguishing characteristics that are very unique to them. Leaders are people who inspire people follow to their footsteps; they are very determined and focused to achieve their pre-planned goals in any type of organization. The existence of leader or head within an organization is important for several reasons: Firstly, employees will be able to

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recognize and identify the direct authority and upper hierarchical level in the organization. Secondly, every task will be done in a systematic manner. Thirdly, employees will have a platform, where they can come to discuss and seek a solution. Finally, a successful leader can make the environment more acceptable, so that the employees can feel at ease.

### **Leadership**

Leadership that is defined in reference to organizational context is actually the ability to inspire and stimulate others to achieve their targeted goals. It can also be defined as, an act that motivates others to respond in a shared direction.

### **Leadership styles**

Although there are a variety of leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire – which leaders might adopt as the situation demands - but there are situations, which calls for the combination of the above-mentioned styles. Successful leaders are role models for others and the traits that they possess, are acknowledged by the employees, who are truly inspired from their work. Another fact about leaders is that they play many roles simultaneously as inspirer, motivator, trainer, and communicator and so on that makes the acceptance of change easier. However, being a leader and to maintain the same level throughout the career is not an easy job to be performed.

Andrew (2008) contends that leadership calls for different styles. A leader's grouping of his/her approach and action leads to a certain reliability and certainty in dealing with group members. Leadership style is comparatively steady pattern of behavior that categorizes a leader. The acquaintance about leadership style is an extension of understanding of the approaches towards leadership actions and dealings. Most leadership styles are classified on the magnitude of deliberation and certain coping structure. There is a natural tendency for most people to oppose change, so the individual who wants to be influenced by amendments, will require some supporting resource. The group member who is in favor of change has an optimistic influence on other members who are struggling to have a positive attitude about the transformation. It is sensible to be an early adopter of the new organization.

### **Democratic Leadership Style**

According to (Nadeem 2012), "Leadership is a societal persuasion manner, in which the leader search for the intentional contribution of staff, in an attempt to attain organizational objectives, a process whereby one person exerts social influence over other members of the group, a method of swaying the actions of an individual or a collection of individuals in an attempt towards goal accomplishment in a given situation, and a relationship speculation involving both the influencing representative and the individual being influenced". According to Lewin et al (1939) democratic style of management approach is mostly welcomed. Research Article by Naseem and Salman (2015) revealed that relation among coworkers themselves and with the direct head are more influencing than pay and job security.

### **Job Contentment**

Locke (1976) gives a inclusive definition of job contentment as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience".

Job satisfaction is an outcome of employees' insight of how well their job provides those things which are considered essential. It is generally known in the organizational behavior field that job satisfaction is the most vital and commonly studied feelings (Luthans, 1992).

A study conducted by Billingsley and Cross (1992) illustrated that, "leadership support, work involvement and low role conflict can be predicting factor of job commitment, job satisfaction and unwillingness to quit; it can be supported, therefore, that leadership is a job related factor

that influences all dimensions of work and affects employees' behavior, performance and general well being”.

### **What are Managerial Approaches?**

Management approaches are the philosophy, structures and methods that a management team uses to direct an organization.

### **Relationship of Managerial Approaches of Different Leaders with Job Contentment of Employees:**

According to Schein (1991), there is an interrelated connection between the head and the managerial setup. A leader being the head creates such an organization that reveals definite standards and philosophies that constitutes the components necessary for precise culture.

Learning institutes are important places where the upcoming generation is trained, and heads of the school endure a serious burden of liability for their dealings. Heads working in educational setups are same as in other organizations, and as predicted; confronted to the challenge of sustaining and preserving the objectives of the institutions (Northouse, 2000).

Different researches have shown that those organizations that show flexibility in their approach and implement participative type of administrative approach, especially emphasizing on communicational aspects and employees' incentive, the latter are more expected to be pleased and results in the organization's goal accomplishments (Mckinnon et al., 2003).

Rad and Yar (2006) found no relationship between leadership behaviors and employee job satisfaction in Isfahan University Hospitals in Iran, where a participative leadership style was prevalent.

A research conducted by Iqbal and Tatlaha (2012) entitled as, “Leadership Styles and School Effectiveness: Empirical Evidence from Secondary Level” Punjab, Pakistan. This article focused on the role of institutional leadership in relation with schools' effectiveness. The factors responsible for its effectiveness were: the variety of styles adopted by principals and the kind of institution (private or public). It used the survey method approach along with correlation as a statistical tool. The findings of the study revealed that partaking leadership style is welcomed amongst employees in institutions, whether they are public or even private. Research study was conducted in Nakutu District, Kenya; investigated the effects of leadership style on job satisfaction of teachers among secondary schools in the same region. This study employed 274 teachers as a sample and self-structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Comprehensive interview sessions were done both with teachers and principals of the same schools, submissively. The outcomes of the study revealed that multidimensional situations in the school surrounding required principals to take on with special leadership styles that suited the particular situation. The results of the study gave productive contributions to the Ministry of Education, school management, teachers and students. Same outcomes were helpful for teaching and learning process as well as the potentials and challenges posed by the leadership styles particularly adopted by head teachers in these schools. On the whole it may enable them to build up valuable approaches that will support more contributive leadership styles in schools (Karanja, Mugwe & Wanderi, 2013). Other studies, such as those by Angwaomaodoko (2023), Safrida et al. (2023), Oh et al. (2023), Nanjundeswaraswamy (2023), and Ali et al. (2023), along with research by Wijaya et al. (2024), Sapkota et al. (2024), Koirala et al. (2024), Obeng-Asare & Korang (2024), and Zahari et al. (2024), also confirm a strong relationship between democratic leadership style and employee job satisfaction.

### **Structural Framework for the Study**

In order to provide a historical framework for a study on the relationship between democratic leadership and employee job satisfaction, it is vital to delve into the development of these ideas,

as well as the major theories, important research discoveries, and historical research on the subject. This is an organized framework:

### **Overview of Theories of Leadership**

**Trait Theories (1900s–1940s):** The goal of early leadership studies was to pinpoint the characteristics that set leaders apart from non-leaders. This work established the foundation for more contemporary leadership ideas, even though it had nothing to do with democratic leadership particularly. As an illustration, the "Great Man" idea proposed that certain characteristics such as intelligence, confidence, and decisiveness are the foundation of innate leadership. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the democratic leadership style was compared against more authoritarian approaches, such as autocratic leadership. Research conducted in this era has shown how democratic leadership can improve employee engagement and motivation, especially in educational settings. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of participatory management techniques, which supported democratic ideals in organizational decision-making procedures. During this period, researchers such as Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) offered a continuum model that demonstrated the adaptability of leadership philosophies, with democratic leadership holding a prominent place. **2000s–Present:** Democratic leadership has come to be connected more and more with moral leadership practices, empowerment, and encouraging corporate citizenship behaviors as a result of the emergence of transformational leadership and servant leadership.

**Job Satisfaction • Historical Background:** Research on job satisfaction began formally in the 1930s with studies such as Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies. The significance of social and psychological elements in the workplace was highlighted by these studies. The 1940s and 1950s saw the beginning of research on elements like leadership, working conditions, and remuneration that affect job satisfaction. During this time, the notion that a leader's style has an impact on job satisfaction gained traction. The 1960s and 1980s saw the development of important job satisfaction models, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). These frameworks highlighted the ways in which motivational elements such as accomplishment, acknowledgement, and the calibre of leadership impact job happiness.

### **Democratic Leadership and Job Satisfaction: An Interaction**

**1950s–1970s Foundational Research:** Earlier research, such that done by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), showed that democratic leadership might boost output and group satisfaction. Subsequent research concentrated on how this leadership approach increases employee happiness by giving workers a feeling of responsibility and belonging.

**Empirical Research (1980s–2000s):** Research conducted in the 1980s, including studies by Bass (1985) and Likert (1961), revealed a significant relationship between work satisfaction and participative decision-making, which is a defining feature of democratic leadership. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) emphasized how employee satisfaction is influenced by leadership philosophies that grant employees autonomy and decision-making participation.

### **Current Developments (from the 2010s onwards):**

As distributed decision-making and collaborative work settings proliferate in modern organizations, research is emphasizing the need of democratic leadership. Research like that of Nanjundeswaraswamy (2023) highlights how democratic leadership promotes diversity, independence, and environments that are rich in feedback, all of which increase work happiness.

The emphasis has also been broadened to encompass cross-cultural settings, demonstrating that, depending on the expectations of employees and the culture of the organization, democratic leadership may have different effects on job satisfaction.

### **Theoretical Frameworks Linking Job Satisfaction and Leadership**

**Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971):** This theory contends that a leader's approach should change depending on the circumstances and the demands of the workforce, and that a democratic method of decision-making can significantly raise worker satisfaction.

**Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory:** This theory highlights that more engaged, high-quality interactions exist between leaders and workers, which in turn contribute to greater job satisfaction.

**ass, 1985's Transformational Leadership Theory:** While not overtly democratic, transformational leadership promotes employee involvement in order to create a work environment that is conducive to empowerment, motivation, and fulfillment.

### **Research Vacancies and New Developments**

**Cultural Aspects:** New studies have shown that different cultures may have different effects from democratic leadership on work satisfaction. Even though Western civilizations place a high importance on participative leadership, further research is needed to determine whether this style of leadership works well in more hierarchical cultures.

**Technological Influence:** New research opportunities on the relationship between virtual democratic leadership practices and job satisfaction have been made possible by the growth of remote work and digital collaboration platforms.

**Contextual Factors:** New study examines how organizational structures and leadership styles interact, with the idea that more democratic practices work better in flat organizations but less well in more rigidly hierarchical ones.

### **Outline of the framework**

The beneficial effects of participatory decision-making on worker well-being and productivity are highlighted by the historical development of studies on democratic leadership and job pleasure. The advantages of democratic leadership were emphasized in the foundational studies, but more recent studies have continued to examine its efficacy in various organizational and cultural contexts, making it a crucial leadership style for fostering work happiness. This framework can be used as a theoretical basis for your own study and offers a strong foundation for understanding how the relationship between democratic leadership and job satisfaction has been investigated.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the current study were:

1. To determine if a democratic leadership style is positively linked to employee job satisfaction.
2. To examine whether specific managerial approaches under democratic leadership enhance employees' job satisfaction.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were addressed in this research:

- Q.1. Is democratic leadership effective for institutional management in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- Q.2. Is there a positive relationship between leadership style and employee job satisfaction?
- Q.3. What specific managerial strategies do democratic leaders use to boost employees' job satisfaction?

**Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive and quantitative research design, following the outlined methodological procedures:

**Sample Area**

Participants were selected from well-established private schools with Stratified Radom Sampling procedure in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Initially, a structured interview was conducted with the heads of these schools to identify institutions where democratic leadership traits were evident in school management. A Simple Random Sampling technique was employed, and 12 schools led by democratic leaders were identified. In the second phase, teacher employees working under these heads were selected as the study’s sample by Stratified Radom Sampling approach. According to Steven (2012), “stratified random sampling involves grouping items from the entire population into strata, based on their similar characteristics, and then taking samples from each stratum, either proportionately or disproportionately”.

**Sample Size**

The sample included 12 school principals who exhibited democratic leadership styles and managerial approaches. Data was collected from around 200 teacher employees, with 180 valid responses included in the study 15 respondents from each school, ensuring accuracy in the results.

**Sample size estimation formula for selecting employees from each school**

$n = (\text{total number of employees } 180 \div \text{schools } 12)$ , we get 15 employees from 12 selected schools.

**Data Collection and Research Instruments**

A structured interview questionnaire was created to identify democratic leaders within private sector schools. Additionally, a specialized scale questionnaire covering eight dimensions of leadership was designed to collect data from teacher employees.

**Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the scale questionnaire was analyzed using the Chi-Square Test to determine the significance of the managerial approaches that contributed to employee job satisfaction.

**Demographic Details of the Respondents**

**Table 1.1** (Represents the number and percentage of teacher employees working under democratic leadership style)

Category	<u>N</u>	<u>Particulars Mentioned</u>
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Age	180 100%	Below 30 24 (13%)	31-35 63 (35%)	36-40 40 (22%)	41-45 32 (18%)	Above 45 21 (12%)
Qualification	180 100%	B. Sc / B. A 09 (5%)	M. Sc / M. A 129 (72%)	B. S 24 (13%)	M. Phil / M. S 16 (9%)	Ph. D 2 (1%)
Length of Employment in the current School	180 100%	Less than 1 year 20 (11%)	1-2 years 32 (18%)	3-5 years 67 (37%)	6-9 years 44 (24%)	more than 10 years 17 (9%)
Job Experience	180 100%	1-2 years 17 (9%)	3-4 years 41 (23%)	5-6 years 65 (36%)	7-8 years 32 (18)	more than 8 years 25 (14%)

**Source:** Primary Data collected through Questionnaire

**Table 1.1** provides the demographic details of the respondents, highlighting factors that significantly impacted the study's results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since Chi-Square Test is applied to know the difference between categorical variables; those items are discussed here that has highly significant results. It was essential to use Chi-square test so that the characteristics of the population (employees) could be understood from the samples in an interpretable and quantifiable way. All the below mentioned tables of Chi-Square test are based on the findings from the Appendix-A primary data gathering questionnaire (A Scale Questionnaire).

### Managerial Approaches Adopted by Democratic Leaders

#### 1. Task Management Skills

An effective leader must possess diverse methods for handling tasks. In today's fast-paced and competitive environment, task management is a fundamental requirement for high-ranking positions. Leaders should be knowledgeable about various strategies to maximize institutional benefits. A Chi-Square test was applied to assess the significance of task management skills as a factor affecting employee job satisfaction.

**Table 1.2: Chi-Square Test for Task Management Skills**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.119a	4
Likelihood Ratio	26.266	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.764	1

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table shows a high level of significance (Pearson Chi-Square value = .000) between task management by leaders and employee job satisfaction.

## 2. Management of Employees

Effective leadership requires a well-managed approach. A leader must understand the managerial process, including planning, organizing, implementing, directing, controlling, and evaluating. Communication channels should be open, allowing information to flow freely at all levels. A Chi-Square test was used to determine the significance of employee management as a factor influencing job satisfaction.

**Table 1.3: Chi-Square Test for Management of Employees**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.968a	4
Likelihood Ratio	15.934	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.822	1
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table indicates a significant relationship (Pearson Chi-Square value = .005) between proper management of employees and their job satisfaction.

## 3. Organizational Needs

With constant methodological changes in various fields, a competitive spirit and updated training sessions are essential in the educational sector. A capable leader identifies these needs in a timely manner, implementing the latest techniques and ensuring employees are trained and encouraged to adopt them. This ultimately leads to better institutional performance. A Chi-Square test was used to examine the relationship between employee responses regarding their development, training, and grooming by their organizational leader as a factor affecting job satisfaction.

**Table 1.4: Chi-Square Test for Organizational Needs**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.019a	4
Likelihood Ratio	27.695	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.955	1
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table shows a strong significance (Pearson Chi-Square value = .000) between employee responses to organizational needs and their job satisfaction.

## 4. Logical Thinking

Rational decision-making is based on logical reasoning. Democratic leaders evaluate every alternative, weighing its benefits and drawbacks through mutual discussion. Although the final decision rests with the leader, they provide a valid, logical explanation for their choice. This



approach follows the problem-solving steps. A Chi-Square test was applied to determine the significance of providing logical reasons by organizational leaders and its effect on job satisfaction.

**Table 1.5: Chi-Square Test for Logical Thinking**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.894a	4
Likelihood Ratio	15.752	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.011	1
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table shows a significant relationship (Pearson Chi-Square value = .005) between providing logical reasoning through discussion and employee job satisfaction.

### 5. Personnel Control

Although leaders may enforce their views on subordinates, an esteemed leader ensures that employees willingly follow decisions. When employees are well-managed and controlled by their leader, tasks are performed systematically, with clear communication of responsibilities, resulting in high job satisfaction. A Chi-Square test was used to measure the significance of employee responses to personnel control by their organizational head as a factor affecting job satisfaction.

**Table 1.6: Chi-Square Test for Personnel Control**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.398a	4
Likelihood Ratio	31.800	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.315	1
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table shows a strong significance (Pearson Chi-Square value = .000) between personnel control by institutional leaders and employee job satisfaction.

### 6. Employee Progression

Employees, like others, learn through experience and trial and error. A commendable leader recognizes and appreciates employee progress, especially during meetings, which leads to greater job satisfaction. Verbal and monetary acknowledgment motivates employees to further excel in their work and within the organization. A Chi-Square test was used to assess the significance of the organizational head's role in recognizing employee progress and its impact on job satisfaction.

**Table 1.7: Chi-Square Test for Employee Progression**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.739a	4
Likelihood Ratio	11.385	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.042	1
N of Valid Cases	108	

The table indicates a significant relationship (Pearson Chi-Square value = .045) between employee progression recognition by institutional leaders and job satisfaction.

**7. Freedom of Subordinate’s Thoughts**

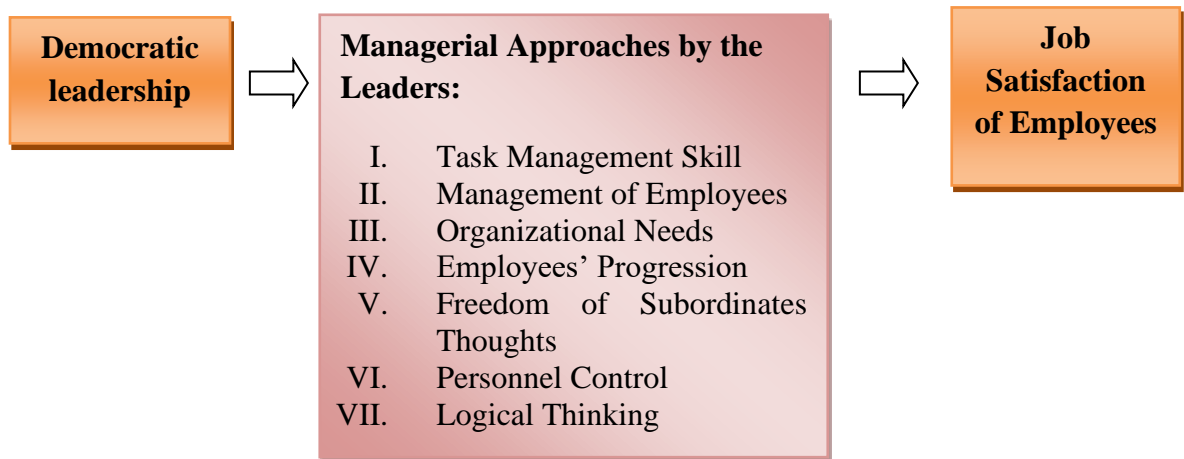
According to Herzberg’s (1959) hygiene factors, freedom of thought and expression is a motivating tool for employees. Leaders should encourage new ideas and perspectives, aligning tasks with the employee’s strengths and allowing them to perform autonomously. When employees successfully complete tasks and achieve positive results, they feel satisfied with both the job and their leader. A Chi-Square test was used to determine the significance of the leader’s approval of subordinates’ freedom in task performance and its effect on job satisfaction.

**Table 1.8: Chi-Square Test for Freedom of Subordinate’s Thoughts**

Observed Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.607a	4
Likelihood Ratio	30.004	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.318	1
N of Valid Cases	180	

The table demonstrates a highly significant relationship (Pearson Chi-Square value = .000) between leaders' approval of freedom of thoughts and employee job satisfaction.

**RESEARCH MODEL**



**Conclusion and Implication**

Significant conclusions were drawn from the quantitative analysis conducted in this study. The conclusions are based on the data analysis presented in earlier sections. The study revealed that managerial approaches adopted by democratic leaders play a critical role in employee job satisfaction, particularly in the context of schools in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study found that employees are generally highly satisfied, motivated, and content with the democratic leadership style. This leadership approach emphasizes individual recognition, fosters an optimistic work environment, and avoids coercive management tactics. The satisfaction and appreciation felt by employees are directly linked to the leadership style adopted by school principals. Various studies have demonstrated that leadership style is a key

factor influencing employee job satisfaction. The findings of this study can be applied to private sector institutional management in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly within educational settings.

### **Recommendations**

Academic research and literature extensively explore different leadership styles and their impact on work performance and employee job satisfaction. It is well-documented that organizations, particularly in the private sector, thrive by fostering a culture that values workers and enhances job satisfaction. Creating a supportive and friendly work environment where teachers feel recognized and enjoy their jobs is essential. This sense of fulfillment, coupled with appreciation, is a key component of the leadership style adopted by school principals. Several areas require further consideration, particularly in understanding leadership styles and their specific impact on employee job satisfaction in the Pakistani context. Based on this, the following recommendations are suggested:

- The current study highlights the importance of training organizational heads or school principals in modern administrative approaches before delegating responsibilities or making appointments.
- Studies of this nature should be conducted in both private and public sectors.
- Institutions should prioritize decentralization of authority, ensuring tasks are handled efficiently, creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and not overburdened.

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